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Hemingway, Orwell, and the Truth of the “Good Fight”: Foreign Combatants’ Accounts  
of the Spanish Civil War

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English Senior Thesis, B Term

Professor Wendy Graham

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### Introduction: Hemingway, Orwell, and Truth

The Spanish Civil War is primarily understood today through art. Certainly the conflict is remote to modern-day Americans, who are much more familiar with World War II than its Iberian precursor. Due to this paucity of historical knowledge, the mainstream image of the war has been shaped by the few depictions of it that have become canonized in Western culture. Picasso's *Guernica* is the most famous visual image of the 1936-1939 fighting, yet it was only part of a larger body of dialogue surrounding propaganda and humanitarianism in wartime art. In literature, Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the one work that Americans today associate with the Spanish Civil War. It was published in 1940, well after the flurry of literature written by English-speaking participants and observers during the war itself. George Orwell wrote his political memoir in 1937, and today *Homage to Catalonia* is considered one of the finest works on the conflict. The fact that only a few books from this massive body of literature are widely read today, however, means that they reveal an incomplete story of the war. Nevertheless, the authors of these books are interested in describing the events they witnessed with journalistic accuracy—the historical truth—as well as depicting the essential experience of the foreign volunteer in Spain—the cultural truth. Works such as *Homage to Catalonia* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* survive as important cultural objects not only because they are well-written literature, but also because they are thought to reflect these core truths about the war. Orwell's memoir and Hemingway's novel move the reader as deeply as Picasso's painting stirs the viewer; they display personal experience in the framework of political art.

Hemingway and Orwell were both prompted by their anti-fascist convictions to fight as foreign volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. When the war broke out the Second Spanish Republic was only five years old, and the 1936 elections had been won by the Popular Front, a leftist coalition composed of Socialists, Communists, Anarchists, and liberals. The new government's dismantling of entrenched structures of power including the Catholic Church and the aristocracy provoked a conservative reaction. General Francisco Franco led a military uprising on July 17, 1936, with the support of the Spanish Fascist Party, the Falange. The coup failed and the country sank into civil war, with Madrid and Catalonia as Republican strongholds at the start of the fighting; the government fled Madrid to Valencia. Fear of worldwide conflict seized the international community. Hemingway was not alone in thinking that the Spanish Civil War was "the dress rehearsal for the inevitable European war" (*Selected Letters* 458). The European powers signed the Non-Intervention Agreement in August 1936 in order to prevent a proxy war. Thousands of foreign soldiers acted independently of their governments that had signed the Act: rather than cave to the eventuality of world war, Orwell, Hemingway, and their fellow volunteers wanted to hand fascism an early defeat.

Several countries defied the Non-Intervention Agreement, however, opting to prepare for global conflict rather than avoiding it. On the Fascist side, Germany and Italy aided Franco with arms, troops, and new technologies of destruction, such as the Luftwaffe. The USSR sent planes and arms to Spain in exchange for a large amount of gold from the Republic. As the sole government openly dealing arms to the Republican regime, Moscow was able to dictate government policy through its influence over the PCE, the Spanish Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de España*). As the war went

on, the PCE's power within the Republican government grew. Such Soviet influence on Spanish policy made the American administration uncomfortable aiding the Republic; victorious, it would bring a communist regime to Western Europe<sup>1</sup>. Western anti-communist bias and misunderstanding meant that the volunteers of the Comintern-controlled International Brigades were often suspect in their home countries<sup>2</sup>. Some writers cast the act of rebelling against their governments as a moral crusade. The sense of urgency in Orwell and Hemingway's books emphasizes the global importance of the Spanish Civil War, while maintaining a personal tone that focuses the reader's attention.

Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are both accounts grounded in personal experience that portray the intersections between the writers' political and personal involvement with Spain. At the heart of each book lies the author's argument that his work is a completely honest portrayal of the war. Of course, the situations in which Hemingway and Orwell fought and wrote, as well as the language and content of their texts, make it clear that they were biased. Hemingway fought the Battle of the Ebro, the Republic's last stand, as part of the International Brigades.

Orwell, by contrast, was a militiaman in Catalonia for a small, anti-Stalinist party called

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<sup>1</sup>The *New York Times*' perspective demonstrates the American underestimation of the fascist threat in the face of the Red Terror, as it seems to take the side of the Spanish "conservatives" in an article from April 26, 1936: "Conservative political leaders have warned Mr. Azaña that violence will be met with violence and that failure on his part to check the Marxist march toward the establishment, first, of a proletarian dictatorship and then of a Soviet régime might provoke beforehand the establishment of a military dictatorship of a fascist character as 'the lesser of two evils'" (Carney).

<sup>2</sup> The International Brigades was a Communist-run organization of foreign volunteers but it was by no means mostly Communist. As early as 1935 the Comintern, anticipating the coming world conflict, sought to ally itself with the bourgeoisie, writing in *Pravda*:

Communists do not conceal the fact that they are fighting to replace...the bankrupt bourgeois democracy with a proletarian democracy through a dictatorship of the proletariat...But Communists cannot remain indifferent to the form in which the bourgeoisie maintain their rule. They, therefore, fight with complete unselfishness to save the remains of bourgeois democracy and against Fascist aggression. (qtd. in Denny)

Certainly the International Brigades could not have recruited so many non-Communist volunteers without the Comintern's turn from Red to pink. Orwell, of course, maintains that during the Spanish Civil War the Soviets played a reactionary role.

the POUM (*Partido Obrero de la Unificación Marxista*, or Worker's Party of Marxist Unification). In May 1937, the POUM supported the Anarchist trade union, the CNT (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajo*, or National Confederation of Labor) in street fighting against the PCE in Barcelona, known as the May Days. The victorious Communists outlawed the POUM and threw many of its members in jail, contradictorily alleging that it was both a Trotskyist and fascist organization. The party certainly shared Trotsky's philosophy of permanent revolution, but there was no evidence that the organization was cooperating with the Fascists. Orwell's memoir argues for the innocence of the POUM while portraying the author's political turn away from Stalinism and toward socialism.

As partisans of a particular political persuasion, Hemingway and Orwell were interested in how to best portray their experiences in prose, both from a political perspective and an aesthetic one. In addition, their adamant defense of the truth of their stories seems to be partly a reaction to the contemporary representation of the events of the Spanish Civil War in the world news media. Each author insists that his version of events is the most authoritative one because it is a firsthand account by a combatant. Given the different literary forms represented by Orwell's memoir and Hemingway's novel, they differ in the amount of importance they accord to political facts. Their disparate perspectives on issues such as the suppression of the POUM demonstrate the scarcity of information about the war while it was ongoing, as well as the bias arising from conflict between the factions among which the authors fought. As autobiographical or semiautobiographical works of literature, however, these books privilege the personal experiences of the authors over extensive historical research in their assessment of truth.

In order to analyze Hemingway's and Orwell's relationships to historical veracity, one must first understand the authors' ideas about what war writing can accomplish. Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, as a memoir, reflects the author's personal experience in a more direct fashion than Hemingway's novel. *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, however, eschews the sort of detailed political discussion that the Englishman employs. While Orwell intends to criticize Stalinism and mobilize his readers to aid the Spanish working class, Hemingway also acknowledges the power of rhetoric. He is aware that the way he tells the story modulates the reader's emotional response and understanding of its political message. For this reason he includes Pilar's descriptions of the "smell of death" and of the atrocities committed by the band of guerrillas at the beginning of the movement (Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* 254, 99). These scenes of emotional intensity engage the reader's attention: Hemingway pulls no punches in creating a vivid and memorable fictional world. The author's acknowledgement of the atrocities committed by Republicans, and his inclusion of the murderous Pablo, demonstrate his commitment to making the novel morally complex. Hemingway not only views both sides critically but also treats all loss of life as a tragedy. He maintains his authority as a writer of war stories by demonstrating his willingness to criticize his own side of the war.

Because *Homage to Catalonia* is a work of nonfiction, Orwell uses it to directly describe the combat that he faced and his own attitudes toward life and death. In writing about his own emotions, he also criticizes what he perceives as callousness in contemporary literature, particularly that about the Spanish Civil War. Orwell wrestles with the distinction between political writing and propaganda in his 1946 essay "Inside the Whale," which is now published, incidentally, in an essay collection entitled *All Art is*



*Propaganda*. The reader should view Orwell's criticism of the communist writers of the 1930s in light of his anti-Stalinist philosophy. His analysis of W.H. Auden's poem "Spain 1937" engages Hemingway's and his own ideas about the literary authenticity that arises from experience. According to Orwell, Auden exposes the purely propagandistic nature of his own poetry by writing with no emotion at all—a callousness that arises from ignorance:

But notice the phrase 'necessary murder.' It could only be written by a person to whom murder is at most a *word*. Personally I would not speak so lightly of murder. It so happens that I have seen the bodies of numbers of murdered men...Mr. Auden's brand of amorality is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled. So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot. (*Why I Write* 125-126)

Orwell's own writing is both left-leaning and strongly biased. What he decries in Auden's work is not the poet's propagandistic tone but his treating life and death as metaphors without a personal understanding of them. *Homage to Catalonia* was inspired by the author's own immersion in all the physical unpleasantness of war, and its political message arises from Orwell's anger at the POUM's suppression. His memoir is one of disillusionment with the Spanish Communist Party and Stalinism as a whole: he arrived in the country supporting the PCE, but turned against it when it violently suppressed the Anarchists and the POUM. Orwell found the Communists' motives counterrevolutionary. As a victim of political oppression, he felt justified in asserting that writers like Auden "can swallow totalitarianism *because* they have no experience of anything but liberalism" (125). Orwell values and accredits political writing based on firsthand experience. It comes as no surprise, then, that he authorizes the political information he relates in *Homage to Catalonia* by highlighting his role as witness and

participant in the events he describes. Truth becomes less about the version of events agreed upon by the greatest number of people—Orwell’s version of the POUM’s suppression was unpopular in his time and not vindicated until decades later—and more about the individual relating the story, and his or her reasons for doing so. Just as Hemingway’s Pilar gains respect as a storyteller because she actively participated in the murders that she describes, Orwell’s authority on the Barcelona May Days in *Homage to Catalonia* arises from his participation in the street fighting.

In their assessment of the accuracy of reports on the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway and Orwell privilege the eyewitness accounts of people who were combatants, as they were. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway purposefully sets up a conflict between a journalist and a soldier when Robert Jordan, the American protagonist who fights behind Fascist lines with a guerrilla group, meets the famous British economist Mitchell. Robert reflects that Mitchell’s writing is “too clear and simple and too open and shut and many of the statistics he knew were faked by wishful thinking. But he thought you rarely cared for journalism written about a country you really knew about and he respected the man for his intentions” (FW 239). Robert dislikes journalism about Spain because he thinks that what he sees in the streets is more authentic than a newspaper article. Aside from his distaste for the “too clear and simple” way the war was being reported, Hemingway was committed, in writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, to proving that Spain was a country that he “really knew about.”

Hemingway and Orwell both lament the misrepresentation of the Spanish Civil War in the media. While the author of *Homage to Catalonia* attacks the British communist papers, Hemingway criticizes the conservative press. Through Hemingway’s

letters we see the personal affront he felt at the misrepresentation of a situation in which he lost beloved comrades-in-arms—the same reason that Orwell cites for his disgust with the media portrayal of the POUM. Perhaps this conviction in and devotion to their individual truth is unique to combatants because it is associated with their memory of fallen comrades. Bonds of friendship formed quickly and unusually at the front; Hemingway's letters illustrate the difference in social interactions between military and civilian groups. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins on 5 May 1938, the writer notes the new way to gain status along the Ebro River: "Nobody's got any social standing at all now who hasn't swum the Ebro at least once" (*L* 466). Physical strength and bravery create a new social hierarchy among the International Brigade troops in Hemingway's regiment. Orwell, on the other hand, found "social standing" problematic, and lauds the classless utopia of the POUM militia as a key point in his own development of socialist ideals. Nevertheless, the two authors agree on the importance of accuracy in reporting. Hemingway declares that the human toll of war is an imperative to report the truth, and claims that eyewitness accounts by combatants are the only reliable sources of information, in a letter to his mother-in-law, Mary Pfeiffer, on 6 February 1939:

When I read in the Sunday Visitor [a Catholic newspaper] about the atrocities of the Reds, the wickedness of the Spanish "Communist" Government...well there's no use talking. But that sort of lying kills things inside of you. They take great pains now to prove Franco never bombed Guernica. It was just blown up by the Reds. Harry Sylvester, who was never in Spain in his life, proved it to me in a long letter. Well I was not in Guernica. But I was in Mora del Ebro, Tortosa, Reus, Tarragona, Sagunto, and many other towns when Franco did exactly what he denies haveing [sic] done in Guernica. (*L* 476)

Hemingway simultaneously disparages Harry Sylvester as an outsider and emphasizes his own experience to prove that the right-wing media was misrepresenting the events of

Guernica. The Pfeiffers were a conservative audience, and perhaps Hemingway included the *Sunday Visitor* reference in order to specifically allude to the media with which they were familiar. Today it is an established fact that the Condor Legion of the Luftwaffe bombed Guernica, so it is unclear whether Hemingway knows, in writing of “Franco,” that it was in fact the general’s Nazi allies who destroyed the Basque town. The author describes the act of misrepresentation as something that “kills things inside of you” because it distorts the death of thousands of people. In his letter, Hemingway echoes Orwell’s sentiment that the truth should be carefully adhered to in matters of life and death. The authors privilege the points of view of combatants because soldiers do not lightly distort the facts of war, given the number of lives that have been lost between each news report.

While Hemingway and Orwell agree that combatants’ accounts should carry the most journalistic weight, the different ideas they have of certain events during the war show that neither of them is in possession of the full truth. Since they rely upon the truth of their stories to persuade their readers, their disagreement reflects personal bias and misinformation, exactly the things that Orwell and Hemingway were quick to denounce in mainstream press accounts of the war. While the central argument of *Homage to Catalonia* depends upon the POUM’s innocence, Hemingway at first believed the Communist allegations against the organization. After John Dos Passos left Spain because a friend was killed as part of the POUM suppression, Hemingway attacked him in a March 1938 letter. Tellingly, Hemingway insists again on the power of experience in this letter, writing to Dos Passos:

The only reason I can see for your attacking, for money, the side that you were always supposed to be on is an unsuppressable [sic] desire to tell the

truth. Then why not tell the truth? The thing is that you don't find out the truth in ten days or three weeks and this hasn't been a communist run war for a long time...Then there is Nin. Do you know where Nin is now? You ought to find that out before you write about his death. (L 464)

Hemingway implies that he is in possession of the truth because he has been in Spain longer than Dos Passos, again relying on firsthand knowledge of the situation for authority. Hemingway also betrays his own lack of information in that he does not know the location of Andreu Nin, the POUM leader, though the Communist line was that he had escaped to Fascist territory. Though Hemingway writes with less surety than Orwell, their starkly contrasting ideas of the political situation are destabilized by their now conflicting claims to veracity. Indeed, Orwell's version of events has been vindicated by the past seventy years of history. Hemingway's anti-POUM rhetoric was much less pointed by 1940, when he wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The conversation between Robert Jordan and the Soviet insider Karkov shows that Hemingway departs from the official PCE position that the POUM was a fascist organization, but stops short of accusing the Communists of political assassination. Karkov describes his denunciation of the POUM:

'Yes. I have sent a cable describing the wickedness of that infamous organization of Trotskyite murderers and their fascist machinations, all beneath contempt but, between us, it is not very serious, the POUM. Nin was their only man. We had him but he escaped from our hands.'

'Where is he now?'

'In Paris. We say he is in Paris. He was a very pleasant fellow but with bad political aberrations.'

'But they were in communication with the fascists, weren't they?'

'Who is not?'

'We are not.'

'Who knows? I hope we are not.' (FW 247)

Karkov seems to admit that Nin was killed in prison—something Hemingway was unwilling to accept in 1938—though he indicates to Robert Jordan that he believes Nin

was indeed a traitor. While the war in Spain continued, Dos Passos's departure seemed a betrayal to the cause, but by 1940, Hemingway had enough distance from the war to take a more rounded approach to the internecine conflict. Since the POUM rejected Comintern authority and was therefore independent from the International Brigades amongst which Hemingway fought, the American author had never been near enough the accused organization to fully understand its philosophy. As Orwell's version of events is today widely accepted, his text supports Hemingway's and his claim that the truth—even a complex political truth—is best approached through personal experience.

The authors of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *Homage to Catalonia* both make claims about the truth of their accounts, while simultaneously acknowledging their own bias. Orwell explicitly states at the end of his memoir that he is aware of writing from a certain political perspective, but insists that such bias is inherent to his subject: he warns the reader, “beware of my partisanship, my mistakes of fact and the distortion inevitably caused by my having seen only one corner of events. And beware of exactly the same things when you read any other book on this period of the Spanish war” (*Homage to Catalonia* 231). Though his authority is founded on his having witnessed and participated in the May Days, Orwell acknowledges that he perhaps has too close a perspective on the conflict between the Communists and the other revolutionary parties. He thus avoids accusations of writing propaganda by claiming that his bias is unintentional.

When Hemingway comments upon the truth of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he admits the war is complex and claims that he limits the events he describes in the book to those he knows well. Hemingway gives Robert Jordan the praise to which the author

himself aspires when Karkov calls Robert's writing true, saying, "It is why I bother with you...I think you write absolutely truly and that is very rare" (FW 248). Robert accepts this as a sort of challenge, resolving to portray the real Spain and all the truth about the war that he knows, thinking, "All right. He would write a book when he got through with this. But only about the things he knew, truly, and about what he knew. But I will have to be a much better writer than I am now to handle them, he thought. The things he had come to know in this war were not so simple" (248). Hemingway shared an awareness of the war's complexity with Robert Jordan, if not Robert's insecurity about his skill in writing. Like Orwell, Robert acknowledges that he has only seen one part of the war, but rather than expanding his scope and admitting that he is biased, he maintains that he will stay within his limited range of knowledge. If one takes this proposed book-within-a-book as not a direct allusion to, but a meta-commentary on, the production of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, then in this passage Hemingway states his project of portraying the complexity of contemporary Spanish society. Whereas Orwell was inspired by his time in Spain to write a broader political treatise condemning Stalinism, Hemingway's novel, while full of global political themes, limits its narrative to the topics its author knows best: war, writing, and Spanish culture.

Orwell and Hemingway's insistence on their own authority, as well as their emphasis on writing truthfully and accurately, arise from the authors' desire to honor fellow soldiers, as well as to combat misrepresentations of the war by noncombatant journalists. While the nature of writing and cultural accuracy are at stake in Hemingway's work, Orwell's memoir is more intent on demonstrating the political facts surrounding the POUM's downfall after the May Days. Of course, the memoirist also

vividly recreates the world of the trenches and the woefully undersupplied militias, in the service of thoroughness and faithfulness to the Spanish life in which he took part. The deep personal involvement of the authors with their subject materializes in their insistence on accuracy—their works have specific political themes that are capable of changing readers' ideas. In order to have this effect, the books must be convincingly accurate and proceed from a reliable witness. The claims to factual truth that Orwell and Hemingway develop are not in conflict with the political agendas of their works. The two aspects are instead mutually supportive, and it is their integration that situates *Homage to Catalonia* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* among the great works of political literature.



### **Orwell and the Intersection of Personal and Political Development**

George Orwell's experience fighting with the POUM militia in Spain in 1937 was nearly fatal, but it helped him refocus his politics and his career, lending a more political bent to his later works. Orwell arrived in Spain intending only to support the Republic, but found himself a political fugitive from the Communist-led regime after becoming embroiled in internecine conflict. Through his experiences on the front lines among the Catalan militiamen, he gained a greater understanding of Spaniards and an urge to defend his comrades-in-arms against what he saw as libel in the left-wing media. *Homage to Catalonia* is the fruit of his desire to tell the truth. In this memoir, written shortly after his return to England in 1937 and published rather unsuccessfully in 1938 and then again in 1952, Orwell details in particular the process by which his life among Spaniards shaped him politically, and what led him to write the book itself. The author emphasizes the need for cultural and historical relativism in the analysis of the Spanish political situation. He comes to support the independence of political parties within the Republic—something he had at first thought counterproductive—as the only possible solution to a problem unique to Spain and to this specific conflict. Orwell's growing socialism was driven by his experience of social equality in the militia, and he became disillusioned with what he saw as the counterrevolutionary aims of the Spanish Communist Party and Stalinism as a whole. Throughout *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell constructs strong political arguments based on his first-hand experience, as well as making personal discoveries by way of political development. As he becomes more deeply involved in the conflict and more familiar with Spanish culture, the author blurs

the boundaries between the realms of personal and political expression. Orwell claims to write more truly the better he understands Spain.

The specific moment upon which Orwell's political argument hinges is the street warfare of the Barcelona May Days and the following persecution of the POUM militia and party members. Orwell's participation in the May Days was somewhat accidental, as he intended to join a Communist militia but did not feel sufficiently rested after his stint at the front, so he took his week of leave still attached to the POUM (*HC* 117). It was during this week that the fighting broke out between the CNT and the PCE. Because the POUM and the CNT shared the belief that socialist revolution should be as important as the war effort, the Marxist party sided with the Anarchists, and was attacked by the PCE as a Trotskyist and fascist organization a few days after the violence in Barcelona had ended. Orwell parses the different meanings of the word "Trotskyist" that were in use at the time, declaring that the POUM was indeed anti-Stalinist, as it rejected Soviet control, and it was in favor of world revolution (176). However, the POUM was neither affiliated with Trotsky's organization—despite the fact that Andreu Nin, the party's leader, "was at one time Trotsky's secretary"—nor a fascist group in disguise (176-177). The Communists blamed the POUM for using the street fighting to divert troops and arms away from the front, to Fascist benefit. As a relatively small party, and not a particularly powerful one, it was susceptible to attack in the media. Several of Orwell's comrades were thrown in jail, and one, Bob Smillie, died under suspicious circumstances in a Valencia prison (216). This Communist purge had a profound effect on Orwell, who sharply criticizes the PCE and its Stalinist policy for what were, to his knowledge, unfounded charges.

This unexpected persecution launched Orwell's writing career in a new direction as his political focus became more specific; his most famous works, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, have their roots in the anti-Stalinist philosophy that he acquired in Spain. Having seen firsthand the Soviets' far-reaching capacity for persecuting their political opponents, he declares in his 1946 essay "Why I Write" that "the Spanish war and other events in 1936-7 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic Socialism, as I understand it" (319). Orwell was a longtime leftist, but these events galvanized his turn against Stalinism. His experience of the Communist-led purge led him to believe for the first time that communist totalitarianism could be as dangerous as the fascist version. Orwell was certainly not a POUM ideologue; he seemed reluctant to embrace the party's policy outright. He did, however, defend the organization because he had friends inside it and he appreciated the socialism he saw at work in the militia. These personal motivations form the foundation of a political argument, for Orwell argues that firsthand experience is indispensable to the understanding of the Spanish political situation.

Orwell was increasingly drawn to socialism as he moved away from Stalinism because of the social equality he witnessed in the militia. Though at first he is skeptical of the strategy of dividing the militias by political party, he eventually rejects this reservation as a foreign prejudice not applicable to the Spanish case (*HC* 47). Orwell describes the importance of his experience with the P.O.U.M militia to his personal politics:

The Spanish militias, while they lasted, were a sort of microcosm of a classless society...The effect was to make my desire to see Socialism

established much more actual than it had been before. Partly, perhaps, this was due to the good luck of being among Spaniards, who, with their innate decency and their ever-present Anarchist tinge, would make even the opening stages of Socialism tolerable if they had the chance. (105)

The politically innovative events that Orwell witnessed in Spain would color the literature he produced after returning to England. His faith in the Spanish working class, and his hope that the country might someday return to the egalitarian state of the militias, are palpable. Orwell is rare among writers for using “Anarchist tinge” in a positive sense, and indeed, he writes favorably of the CNT as the one group willing to defend the POUM when it was suppressed. He claims that by welcoming him into their culture, the Spanish people have contributed to his newfound enthusiasm for socialism. The Spaniards’ “innate decency” is important because Orwell seems very interested in “decency” as a basic human value—that is, a respect for human life that he feels fascism threatens and socialism magnifies. This idea could reflect the greater openness and warmth that Spaniards are often said to show, as compared to the stereotypically reserved Northern European disposition.

This perception of Spanish hospitality may have been one of the attractions the country held for foreign volunteers. Orwell believed the English had a particular affinity with the Spanish people, noting, “It says a lot for the Spanish character that the English and the Spaniards always got on well together, in spite of the language difficulty” (39). For writers confronted with the reality of the war, being welcomed by Spaniards was perhaps what kept them there and made them write about their experiences. Again, however, it is apparent that a political situation—the socialist nature of the militias—taught Orwell about the culture of “the true Spain,” and likewise, he applied his knowledge of Spain to understand why the militias function so well.

Orwell's move toward socialism and away from Stalinism was a long, complex process that he documents over the course of his memoir. The author had only a tenuous grasp of the Spanish situation when he arrived; he notes that he intended to work as a journalist but joined a militia "because at that time and in that atmosphere it seemed the only conceivable thing to do" (4). Orwell seemed to have only a vague idea of what he wished to accomplish in the global fight against fascism; originally he was simply fascinated by the revolution in Barcelona. He was certainly familiar with the romantic legend of Old Spain—which is interesting considering that the Fascists were exploiting this myth to augment their own power. Orwell admits possessing preconceptions about Spain before he arrived, which were not validated until a day trip he took from Barcelona a few days before leaving:

In the quiet back streets of Lérida and Barbastro I seemed to catch a momentary glimpse...of the Spain that dwells in everyone's imagination. White sierras, goatherds, dungeons of the Inquisition, Moorish palaces, black winding trains of mules, grey olive trees and groves of lemons, girls in black mantillas, the wines of Málaga and Alicante, cathedrals, cardinals, bull-fights, gypsies, serenades—in short, Spain. Of all Europe it was the country that had had most hold upon my imagination. (203)

Orwell asserts that this vision of Spain is not even his private stereotype, but one that captured "everyone's imagination." Nevertheless, it was strong enough to persist through the months of fighting during which he came to recognize the real Spain. Spanish culture—or its imagined essence—seems to endure despite the terrible violence, though Orwell could not have seen all of the images he lists. Most disturbingly, the "cardinals" in this part of Spain had probably been killed by the Republicans at the start of the war. The "dungeons of the Inquisition" provide a Gothic image that, unlike the others, does not recall beauty—perhaps it is an allusion to Orwell's friends who are imprisoned in

contemporary Spain. Overall, the author finds this romantic glimpse of the Spanish myth rewarding at the end of his stay, perhaps because this stereotype helped draw him to the country and thus seems to have been finally fulfilled. Fighting fascism was a noble cause, but the idea of protecting the olive groves and mantilla-clad girls, if not the cathedrals, added a certain cachet to the “good fight.” Though Orwell admits idealizing Spain before he arrived, he does not romanticize the violence of the war, or the vestiges of the medieval era. In fact, his experiences in Spain captured his imagination in a very different way than he had expected—they changed and solidified his political philosophy as well as making him appreciate the realities of the country and the people.

Because Orwell saw the near-classless society of the militias as a step toward a socialist utopia, he was frustrated by the PCE’s attempts to stifle the revolution. The celebrated socialism of the militias was only made possible by their separation by political party. Orwell initially perceived this segregation as detrimental to the war effort, but came to approve of it after he recognized the Communist Party’s increasing conservatism. He recalls originally thinking, “‘Why can’t we drop all this political nonsense and get on with the war?’ This of course was the correct ‘anti-Fascist’ attitude which had been carefully disseminated by the English newspapers, largely in order to prevent people from grasping the real nature of the struggle” (47). Orwell lays claim to a greater authority than the English press—knowledge of “the real nature” of the problems in Spain, which to him are more complicated than a war between fascism and republicanism. When Orwell arrived in Spain, the working class was in control in Barcelona. Certain factions, including the POUM, insisted that the socialist revolution was as important as the war, and were thus rather uneasily allied with the Republic. The

heavily Communist government of the Republic, on orders from Moscow, was in fact intent on curbing the revolution to focus on the war effort. Why would the foreign press, especially the socialist and communist publications to which Orwell refers, be interested in obscuring the revolutionary nature of the Spanish Civil War? Orwell speculates that:

Well-meaning propagandists undoubtedly thought that they were aiding the Spanish Government by denying that Spain had 'gone Red.' But the main reason was...In particular the Communist party, with Soviet Russia behind it, had thrown its whole weight against the revolution. It was the Communist thesis that revolution at this stage would be fatal and that what was to be aimed at in Spain was not workers' control, but bourgeois democracy. (51)

The left-wing foreign press—incorporating more moderate anti-fascist publications as well as communist ones—wanted to garner support for the Spanish Republic, but Orwell rightly points out the complication caused by the Stalinist stance on the revolution. The Soviets, and by extension the Communist-controlled Republic, were working to preserve bourgeois control because they believed that capital was essential to the defeat of fascism. The USSR was also unwilling to support a socialist revolution if it meant losing valuable allies in the coming world war. Communist magazines were in the awkward position of trying to garner support for the war without encouraging revolutionaries who might push the balance of power in Spain toward “workers’ control.” Orwell maintains that combatants in Spain were privy to much more information—even about Communist strategy—than was disseminated abroad by the press. It is unclear, however, whether the reporters on location were obscuring such details, or whether they were censored by the higher levels of their organizations to serve the specific agendas of the publications. In any case, Orwell decries the attention that the British left-wing press paid to Moscow policy at the expense of the Spanish working class.

In America, by contrast, the revolution was reported from the prevailing anti-communist perspective that had persisted since the previous Red Scare. The *New York Times* watched with horror as the proletariat took control of Barcelona, citing a professor at Barcelona University as saying, “‘The hordes now in charge in Catalonia resemble sewer rats come up for air, and I fear it is going to be difficult to force them down into their sewers again, whatever happens’” (qtd. in “Regime”). The *Times* was clearly not concerned about frightening off potential support for the Spanish cause, as Orwell indicates the British press may have been. The American mainstream media had as negative an opinion of Communism as it did of fascism, even as the latter grew in power.

It was in this journalistic environment, in which every paper seemed to be working its own angle, that Orwell fought for the POUM and became a fugitive, thereby realizing the necessity of telling his own story, unpopular as it was. As an outsider he was uniquely placed to explain the peculiarities of the May Days to the world. He felt particularly out of place among the barricades, writing, “The people of Barcelona are so used to street-fighting and so familiar with the local geography that they know by a kind of instinct which political party will hold which streets and which buildings. A foreigner is at a hopeless disadvantage” (*HC* 131). The idea of routine street fighting seems absurd until one is caught up in it. When Orwell describes finding himself on the roof of a movie theater exchanging pleasantries with the enemy troops atop the Café Moka across the street, he captures not just the events but the spirit of that unique time as well (133). The random shooting that prevailed made it difficult for journalists to report on the May Days, so Orwell’s firsthand account as a participant is authoritative and historically momentous. The author insists, “It is necessary to try and establish the truth, so far as it



is possible. This squalid brawl in a distant city is more important than might appear at first sight,” because it shows the willingness of the Communists to work against revolution in the interest of consolidating their own power (149). This is the fact he repeats most emphatically, and it would figure into his later works and become more apparent to the rest of the world in the 1940s. Embedded in Orwell’s argument is his assertion that he is biased because of his experience as a victim of Stalinist persecution. He seems to embrace this bias rather than seeing it as an impediment to the truth, however, perhaps because his perspective was overwhelmed by a press corps declaring that the POUM was a counterrevolutionary and even fascist organization, simply because it disagreed with Soviet policy.

Orwell’s anger at being betrayed by the Communist party, an organization for which he had been willing to die on the front lines when he arrived in Spain, was an important factor in motivating him to write *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell channels emotion into effective political argument. The memoir is an account of seven formative months in his life in all their ideological complexity, as he turns away from Stalinism and embraces democratic socialism ever more fervently. Nevertheless, Orwell maintains that before the war he had little idea of the political disorder that he would find in Spain: “If you had asked me why I had joined the militia I should have answered: ‘To fight against Fascism,’ and if you had asked me what I was fighting *for*, I should have answered: ‘Common decency’” (47). Orwell may be exaggerating the former vagueness of his ideas to better contrast with the mental clarity he lays claim to as he writes upon his return to England. However, the events that caused the writer to convert from an anti-fascist into an active combatant, and from there into a polemicist, are central to the investigation of

his literature. Orwell claims that he was drawn to join the militia because he had high ideals and was somewhat misinformed, but he also maintains that what he saw in Spain was the truth, which he feels impelled to share through his memoir.

Accidental as his attachment to the POUM militia may have been, it became the institution that was key to Orwell's personal experience in Spain. *Homage to Catalonia* is a memoir of the war, after all, and it is through his time as a combatant—whether at the front in Teruel or on the rooftop in Barcelona—that Orwell learns the most about Spain and her people, and thus develops his political stances. Though he finds it difficult to be idealistic about the disheveled Republican army as an institution, his growing appreciation for his fellow soldiers provides the impetus for his forceful political writing—he makes the reader sense his conviction. Orwell constantly compares the army and society in Spain to those in his native Britain. One of his most-repeated generalizations is that Spain is disorderly in comparison to the Northern European countries, a finding that seems to corroborate the traditional view of Spain as the land of goats and olives. But though defeat in a duel may have been elegant in the Spain of centuries past, defeat in the war against fascism was simply not an option. The global importance of the war colors Orwell's horror at how poorly equipped and trained his regiment is as it makes its way to the front: "It seemed dreadful that the defenders of the Republic should be this mob of ragged children carrying worn-out rifles which they did not know how to use. I remember worrying what would happen if a Fascist aeroplane passed our way...Surely even from the air he could see that we were not real soldiers?" (19). The very phrase "defenders of the Republic" provides a glimpse of the popular wartime rhetoric—but Orwell destroys its heroic tone in the next clause. He is dismayed

and discouraged by the lack of “real soldiers” among the militiamen. Orwell proves that the romantic heroism of ordinary people, even teenagers, taking up arms in defense of their ideals, seems glorious in concept, but in fact is not very useful in modern warfare. Among Orwell’s regiment, survival was more important than valor. Romanticizing war was a job for the Fascists, who promoted an image of themselves as the heirs to Spain’s honor-obsessed imperial tradition.

Of course, the Fascists that Orwell saw measured up neither to their own ideal nor to the British writer’s initial stereotypes; they are actually surprisingly peripheral to the narrative of *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell’s initially uncompromising anti-fascism is frustrated at the front not only by the distance between the two trenches, which makes it impossible to shoot anyone, but also by the fact that the enemy troops, when they deserted, “were not Fascists at all, merely wretched conscripts who had been doing their military service at the time when war broke out and were only too anxious to escape...It struck me that they were indistinguishable from ourselves, except that they wore khaki overalls” (17). Many soldiers involved in trench warfare feel this affinity with the enemy that complicates wartime duties, but in a civil war the feeling is heightened because the two sides share a culture and nationality. Though it is unlikely that Orwell actually thought he would be killing top members of the Falange, he does betray some frustration with the lack of action at the front. Anti-fascist ideals alone do not keep him there—the camaraderie that he builds with his fellow soldiers does that. *Homage to Catalonia* is not only a narrative of the Spanish Civil War, but also of the general psychological experience of war. In a situation in which “except at night, when a surprise attack was always conceivable, nobody bothered about the enemy...the real preoccupation of both

armies was trying to keep warm,” Orwell had to time to integrate himself into Spanish culture (23). The relationships he developed with his comrades-in-arms and his growing understanding of the economic situation as seen through their eyes, form the foundations of his turn against Stalinism.

As part of his learning process, Orwell analyzes characteristics of Spanish society and converts them into sources of political and literary meaning. The social equality that so captures his imagination at the front and during his first stay in Barcelona is one such trait. Others include the general logistical disorder that prevails even in wartime, as well as the sense of charity that encompasses even one’s enemies. The combination of these characteristics, Orwell believes, or perhaps simply hopes, will save Spain from becoming another Germany even if Franco is victorious. He recalls his attempt, following the POUM’s suppression, to rescue his commander Georges Kopp from jail. An officer at the police station shook hands with him despite Orwell’s affiliation with what was widely thought to be a fascist organization (223). To the author, this was a simple sign of the goodness of the Spanish people:

I do not know if I can bring home to you how deeply that action touched me...I record this, trivial though it may sound, because it is somehow typical of Spain—of the flashes of magnanimity that you get from Spaniards in the worst of circumstances. I have the most evil memories of Spain, but I have very few bad memories of Spaniards themselves...They have, there is no doubt, a generosity, a species of nobility, that do not really belong to the twentieth century. It is this that makes one hope that in Spain even Fascism may take a comparatively loose and bearable form. Few Spaniards possess the damnable efficiency and consistency that a modern totalitarian state needs (223).

Orwell often observes that the Spanish are more open and generous than the British, but his attribution of this characteristic to an outdated “nobility” is notable for its connotations in modern Spanish society. The aristocracy, which prided itself on its

culture of manners, was indeed a vestige of the nineteenth century that was torn down by the revolution of 1931. Since the people among whom Orwell fought are the working classes, by “nobility” the author more likely means the transcendence of petty differences and the recognition of the dignity of the human spirit. He follows this philosophical praise with the backhanded compliment that Spaniards would make poor totalitarians—which, given Orwell’s pointed opposition to all totalitarianism, may in fact be the highest praise of the book.

Orwell is constantly examining and reassessing his political views based on his new experiences, and he these epiphanies inspire him to craft his arguments. He laments the poverty that he sees among the Spanish peasants, but forgoes the traditional characterization of Spain as a romantic yet backward place, instead reflecting analytically on such destitution. In Huesca, Orwell finds a harrow made with flint “that took one straight back to the later Stone Age...It made me sick to think of the work that must go into the making of such a thing, and the poverty that was obliged to use flint in place of steel. I have felt more kindly toward industrialism ever since” (80). Orwell’s change in attitude reflects an intellectual transition from a romantic view of Spain to a more practical one. Industrialism may be less picturesque and separate the farmer from the earth, but it has the power to alleviate the suffering of the downtrodden, something that Orwell claims is one of his goals. He thus documents his reconsideration of pastoral idealism in favor of the practical use of technology—a change born of sincere astonishment at the gap between his own material culture and that of the Spanish peasants.

Orwell seems interested in the degree to which he can remain accessible to his British audience while still demonstrating the intimate knowledge of Spain that legitimizes his work. He portrays his gradually growing appreciation of Spanish culture by documenting the ways in which he learns within it and about it. Orwell's tone seems confused at moments, however. Sometimes he describes his learning own process and how it affects his political development. At other times, he seems to be an amateur anthropologist, as when he says of the graveyard in Huesca, "It was queerly different from an English graveyard. No reverence for the dead here!" (80). This sort of Anglocentrism indicates Orwell's initial instinct to compare everything he experiences in Spain to its English counterpart—it shows a lack of the cultural relativism which characterizes his political arguments. The cemetery is strewn with bones and broken gravestones that are perhaps the remains of Catholicism, which is pervaded by imagery of death and human relics. The Spanish peasants do not respect the dead less; they are merely more comfortable with death and its accoutrements. Orwell, on the other hand, sees a lack of religion in the graveyard—citing the oppression of the Church and the rise of Anarchism that may have supplanted it, the religious inscriptions "chipped off by some enterprising atheist with a chisel" (81). This insight demonstrates Orwell's knowledge of the Spanish political situation, shortly after the author has admitted to judging Spain from an English standpoint—thus this passage represents the midpoint in his integration into Spanish culture. The author's comparison of the reality of the graveyard to his expectations is an example of his ongoing analysis of his own relationship to Spain. Orwell clearly felt that he understood enough about the country to make generalizations throughout the text, but sometimes these observations, rather than lending his words

authenticity, demonstrate the difficulties of living abroad and coming to know a new place. The inconsistencies in his tone illustrate the complex process by which a foreigner learns how to relate to his adopted country.

This learning need not come only from informal moments, however; the author augments his long sought-after knowledge of the true Spanish character through his political experiences. A longtime leftist, upon arrival in Barcelona he is delighted to find that the city is being run by the working class. However, fresh from England, he initially views the socialist atmosphere rather cynically, writing, “To anyone from the hard-boiled, English-speaking races there was something rather pathetic in the literal-ness with which these idealistic Spaniards took the hackneyed phrases of revolution” (6). Indeed, the Spanish workers had not had any say in their government until 1931; they had reason to be excited about a system that gave them political power. As a foreign volunteer, Orwell was necessarily an idealist himself. Over time, his idealism merely changed form, as anti-fascism solidified into anti-totalitarianism, and his socialist convictions strengthened. As he fought among the Spanish workers in the trenches and on the rooftops, he became more and more outspoken about his solidarity with them. Orwell writes that that when a Communist acquaintance said after the May Days that he should join the International Brigades, he thought, “I could not join any Communist-controlled unit. Sooner or later it might mean being used against the Spanish working class” (145). Having endured the horrors of the trenches and the shock of political persecution among the workers, he chose their cause over the chance to fight in a better-organized international regiment.

As he grew more attached to the cause of the Spanish working class, Orwell denounced the foreign media for misrepresenting the war and also expressed his disappointment in the Western nations' refusal to come to Spain's aid. According to the writer, "Except Russia and Mexico no country had the decency to come to the rescue of the Government" (53). Again his emphasis on "decency" emerges; he perceives inaction as callousness and takes it as a personal affront, given his emotional involvement. Perhaps the stigma associated with communism in the Western world accounted for the nations' preconceptions about the PCE and its potential to provoke world revolution. Orwell notes that "outside Spain it has caused an immense amount of misunderstanding," but "among the parties on the Government side the Communists stood not upon the extreme Left, but upon the extreme Right," as a reactionary force (56). The author implies that if the US and UK had recognized the extent to which the USSR was willing to go to curtail socialist revolution in Spain, they may have been more comfortable aiding the Republic. Perhaps the Communists' fear that "revolution at this stage would be fatal" acknowledges Western unease about communism—revolution would not, in fact, be deadly to the state but rather to the Republic's international reputation (51). As he spent more time immersed in the socialist atmosphere of the militia, Orwell became more supportive of the POUM's prioritization of the revolution even as he realized that the PCE was intent on thwarting it.

His growing commitment to the workers' cause made Orwell trust the media less and less, increasing his conviction that his was the only valid perspective on the political situation. In *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell criticizes the journalists who write with no regard to the damage they are causing, as well as the woeful lack of information on the



front lines. In the aftermath of the May Days, he writes, “there must have been numbers of men who were killed without ever learning that the newspapers in the rear were calling them Fascists. This kind of thing is a little difficult to forgive” (208). This is the strength of the combatant’s narrative: Orwell felt morally obligated to write the book on behalf of these men who were so betrayed by the rest of the media. Near the end of the book he attempts to summarize his time in Spain, and returns again to the people as the most memorable aspect:

I suppose I have failed to convey more than a little of what those months in Spain mean to me. I have recorded some of the outward events, but I cannot record the feeling they have left me with. It is all mixed up with sights, smells, and sounds that cannot be conveyed in writing: the smell of the trenches...above all the faces of militiamen—men whom I knew in the line and who are now scattered Lord knows where...When you have had a glimpse of such a disaster as this...the result is not necessarily disillusionment and cynicism. Curiously enough the whole experience has left me with not less but more belief in the decency of human beings.  
(229-230)

Orwell struggles with the familiar literary problem of conveying sensory experience through words. His purpose in writing *Homage to Catalonia*, however, is to commemorate his comrades-in-arms, including those still living, and to celebrate the human condition. These positive themes would not have been possible without Orwell’s recognition that his experience was uniquely Spanish—to him, it is no longer the country of goats and mantillas but specific people, places, and smells. A vague ideal has given way to a literary purpose that can be applied to international politics, though its inspiration was Spanish through and through.

Orwell writes so passionately about the portrayal of the war in the media because the stakes are high; soldier’s lives and the future of Europe hang in the balance. Criticizing the communist articles that demonize the POUM, the author writes, “libels

and press-campaigns of this kind, and the habits of mind they indicate, are capable of doing the most deadly damage to the anti-Fascist cause” (178). This sentence is a reminder of Orwell’s intended audience and the climate in which he was writing: his memoir may have had a socialist aim, but fighting fascism was his priority. When the author predicts the future he seems optimistic about a Republican victory in Spain, writing about what would happen “when Franco was beaten” (180). Orwell has some frightening ideas about what form the government would take if the Republic won the war, but he makes it clear that Franco is the ultimate enemy:

No one in his senses supposed that there was any hope of democracy, even as we understand it in England and France...It would be a dictatorship, and it was clear that the chance of a working-class dictatorship had passed. That meant that the general movement would be in the direction of some kind of Fascism. Fascism called, no doubt, by some politer name, and—because this was Spain—more human and less efficient than the German or Italian varieties...But it did not follow that the Government was not worth fighting for as against the more naked and developed Fascism of Franco and Hitler...The Popular Front might be a swindle, but Franco was an anachronism. Only millionaires or romantics could want him to win. (180-181)

It is jarring that Orwell calls the projected Communist government “Fascist,” but unsurprising given that he portrays the current one as reactionary. His statement that this Communist “Fascism”—he probably had Stalinism in mind—would be “more human” than Hitler’s or Mussolini’s governments reveals his affection for the Spanish people. However, at this point in time Franco was taking cues from these dictators. Much as Orwell defends the partisan militias and socialist revolution in Spain, he perceives fascism as the greatest threat to Europe in 1937. The last sentence of *Homage to Catalonia* shows how urgent this danger is to Orwell, as he describes returning from Spain to “the deep, deep sleep of England, from which I sometimes fear that we shall

never wake till we are jerked out of it by the roar of bombs” (232). This warning of future violence is a last appeal to the English readers, an attempt to impress upon them the relevance of the war in Spain, the importance of active political inquiry, and the dangers of totalitarianism.

To Orwell, however, the relevance of the Spanish Civil War does not imply that everyone who wrote about it had something useful to say. Throughout *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell shows his contempt for the writers who are not at the front lines—or not even in Spain at all—writing, “It is not a nice thing to see a Spanish boy of fifteen carried down the line on a stretcher, with a dazed white face looking out from among the blankets, and to think of the sleek persons in London and Paris who are writing pamphlets to prove that this boy is a Fascist in disguise” (65). In this passage, Orwell puts his personal experience to work for his political message. He appeals to the reader’s sympathy with his image of the child soldier, and then uses stereotype to portray the communist pamphleteers as “sleek”—that is, bourgeois and ultimately hypocritical. However propagandistic, this image proceeds from what Orwell saw with his own eyes: much of the political maneuvering against the POUM occurred while he was at the front, but the soldiers there had little news of it, occupied as they were with fighting for the Republic.

Orwell shows that he is aware of his partisanship throughout the book, and after it was written, according to Peter Davison, editor of the *Complete Works*, he attempted to remove the most political chapters before publication (321). He stands by the feelings that led him to write *Homage to Catalonia*, however, saying in “Why I Write” that his memoir “is written with a certain detachment and regard for form. I did try very hard in

it to tell the whole truth without violating my literary instincts. But among other things...If I had not been angry about that I should never have written the book” (*WIW* 320). His primary motive in writing is telling “the whole truth,” but it is clear that he is aware that bias played an important part in the creation of *Homage to Catalonia*. This defense of anger as a reliable starting point for a work of journalism is typical of Orwell, who is so interested throughout the book in his own mindset at various points in time.

George Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia* is an account of personal change brought about by front-line experience. It is a personal manifesto that maps out the author’s newfound political convictions. However, this literary memoir illustrates more than a writer’s personal turn against Stalinism. It comments on the process of a foreigner’s integration into another culture by detailing Orwell’s growing love for Spain and the Spaniards. The Spanish Civil War was pivotal not only for its influence on the themes of Orwell’s later books, but also for the type of political discourse with which it surrounded itself. The influx of foreign writers into Spain meant that the literature associated with the war necessarily focused on the specific challenges of a dual existence as both cultural outsider and defender of a country that one had come to love. The process of “becoming Spanish” is conflated with the development of a political ideology; in finding the true Spain, Orwell discovers the truth about totalitarianism.

### Hemingway's "Real" Spain

Ernest Hemingway arrived to fight in Spain in March 1937. Like Orwell he went with the intention of reporting and later enlisted; Hemingway, however, joined the International Brigades and fought at the Battle of the Ebro. His 1940 novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* narrates four days in the life of Robert Jordan, a young American dynamiter working behind Fascist lines with a Republican guerrilla group north of Madrid. The character's experience differs from that of Hemingway, who uses Robert to explore the specific struggle of the foreign soldier's life in Spain. Robert's growing relationship with the country and its people illuminates Spain's complexity as well as the difficulty of Hemingway's literary project. Hemingway returned convinced that his account was more valuable than that of the mainstream media because he had participated firsthand in the fighting; this sentiment undoubtedly factored into his decision to tell a version of his story in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

As fiction, the novel could reach a wider audience than journalism and expose basic truths to which the mass media did not have access, such as the psychological trauma unique to the soldier's experience. Hemingway's novel endures because of its literary and entertainment value, but it also teaches readers about the political and social environment surrounding the Spanish Civil War and as the foreign volunteer's experience. Rather than developing a pointed political message as Orwell's memoir does, the novel simply supports the Spanish working class through its character development and through Robert's monologues. While Hemingway's anti-fascist ideology lies behind the novel, the author seems less interested in portraying the details of the political situation than the essence of Spanish culture. The realistic detail with

which Hemingway shapes the personalities and mannerisms of his Spanish characters gives him more authority and thus heightens the effect and historical relevance of the novel itself. The emphasis Hemingway places on the complexity of Spain makes his novel more truthful because of the cultural knowledge that it expresses.

Hemingway differs from other writer-combatants such as Orwell in that he had lived in Spain before the civil war. He was therefore not only fighting for political ideals, but also defending a place that he already knew intimately. Hemingway felt a strong sense of duty toward the country when the war broke out, saying in a letter on 9 February 1937 to the parents of Pauline Pfeiffer, his current wife, “for a long time me and my conscience both have known I had to go to Spain,” (L 457). His “conscience” and his political convictions were closely related; he felt obligated to defend a country he loved from fascism. In another letter, he emphasizes his affinity for the Spanish working classes when he writes to Harry Sylvester on 5 February 1937, “It’s none of my business and I’m not makeing [sic] it mine but my sympathies are always for exploited working people against absentee landlords even if I drink around with the landlords and shoot pigeons with them. I would as soon shoot them as the pigeons” (456). Hemingway describes the conflict he feels between his sense of duty and the reality of life as a wealthy international celebrity: the upper echelons of society were drawn to him even as he was more interested in the working class. This interest may have been partially fueled, however, by his fascination with the cult of machismo. Hemingway wrote several works about bullfighting, and the violence of Spanish masculinity had shaped his literary aesthetic by the time he wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Though Hemingway qualifies his statement of solidarity with the working class with the claim that “it’s none of my

business,” clearly he feels an attachment to Spain that makes the war his concern. The author returned from the war with a desire to share what he had seen. His letters from after his return to America protest against what he feels are misrepresentations of the Spanish Civil War in the American press; like Orwell, he would rather write the news himself. The urgent tone of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* proceeds in part from Hemingway’s conviction that he was in possession of unique information.

One of the points Hemingway emphasizes in the novel is that the Spanish situation has applications to global issues of class and injustice. However, though the themes of the novel are accessible to other cultures and thus to his American readership, Hemingway nevertheless refuses to generalize or present a monolithic view of Spain. His book is at once a love letter to his difficult lady, Spain, and a war story that conveys ideas about death and violence that transcend cultural boundaries. The author uses Robert Jordan to give voice to this interplay between specific analysis of the country and contemplation of the nature of war, as when the character wonders about the pleasure his fellow soldier Agustín takes in killing, and comes to recognize the same emotion in himself:

We do it coldly but they do not, nor ever have. It is their extra sacrament. Their old one that they had before the new religion came from the far end of the Mediterranean, the one they have never abandoned but only suppressed and hidden to bring it our again in wars and inquisitions. They are the people of the Auto de Fé; the act of faith. Killing is something one must do, but ours are different from theirs. And you, he thought, you have never been corrupted by it? You never had it in the Sierra?...*Qué va*, he told himself. At every train. Stop making dubious literature about the Berbers and the old Iberians and admit that you have liked to kill as all who are soldiers by choice have enjoyed it at some time whether they lie about it or not. (FW 287)

Robert brings pagan Iberia and the Inquisition into the discussion in an attempt to explain this passion for killing that makes him so uncomfortable. His self-examination leads him to recognize a universal truth about the nature of war. Violence may indeed have corrupted him, but it did so not by way of the violent Spanish culture, but through the horror of war itself—or the elation of vengeance associated with war. The statement that all volunteers enjoy killing is bold coming from a writer who undoubtedly killed many enemy soldiers in his lifetime; Hemingway forces the reader to wonder whether he, like Robert Jordan, has indeed taken pleasure in it. The author-soldier makes his voice uncomfortably clear in what seems a personal confession that extends to include soldiers of other wars. Robert Jordan was familiar enough with the country's long history to think up "dubious literature" about ancient Spain. Hemingway engages in a similar process of examining history and processing it to examine the current situation, though he does so through the lens of his political novel.

The author uses free indirect discourse associated with Robert Jordan's thoughts to portray Spain's multidimensionality, and thus argue for the historical importance of both the subject matter and his work. This in-depth analysis of the country demonstrates Hemingway's narrative authority and explores the foreign volunteer's psychological experience. In moments of frustration and anger, Robert initially stereotypes Spaniards, but he always revises these generalizations, tempering his emotion with experience. He goes through this mental process when Pablo steals his dynamite, thinking:

Muck this whole treacherous muck-faced mucking country and ever mucking Spaniard in it on either side and to hell forever....Muck them before we die for them. Muck them after we die for them. Muck them to death and hell. God muck Pablo. Pablo is all of them. God pity the Spanish people. Any leader they have will muck them. One good man, Pablo Iglesias, in two thousand years...Muck everybody but the people



and then be damned careful what they turn into when they have power. His rage began to thin...If that were true what are you here for? It's not true and you know it. Look at all the good ones. Look at all the fine ones. He could not bear to be unjust. He hated injustice as he hated cruelty and he lay in his rage that blinded his mind until gradually the anger died down and the red, black, killing anger was all gone. (370)

In his anger, Robert initially latches onto the deranged murderer Pablo as representative of all Spaniards, bitterly acknowledging that because of his dedication to the leftist cause he will still “die for them.” He then narrows his generalization to Spanish leaders, praising Pablo Iglesias, the founder of the Spanish Socialist Party, as an exception, and thus further aligning himself with the working class. Robert, of course, is a version of what Hemingway aspired to be, which allowed the author to explore issues of cultural assimilation through the character's thoughts while also making Robert express things that Hemingway could not write in his own voice. Hemingway's sympathy for the Spanish workers was fueled by his passion for uncovering the authentic Spain. Ultimately it lay behind his decision to fight in the war, on the side of “the people of the country versus the absentee landlords, the moors [sic], the italians [sic] and the Germans. I know the Whites are rotten because I know them very well and I would like to have a look at the others to see how it lines up on a basis of humanity” (*L* 458). When Robert asks himself, “what are you here for?” he acknowledges that it is a love of Spain and her people that has brought him to there to fight against fascism. He has enough faith in the Spanish working class to lay down his life for it, and he comforts himself with the thought that his work and eventual death will help the cause.

Hemingway provides another reason for Robert's dedication to the cause and his maintenance of his idealist spirit in the fight against “injustice”: he is no longer a complete outsider, but has become, after a fashion, a Spaniard. The author suggests

Robert is an integral part of Spain as he describes his “red, black, killing anger.” These colors of blood and death, of the palettes of Velázquez and Goya, link the emotion of anger itself to the country. Red and black are also the colors used by the Anarchists, a group that Hemingway condemns throughout the novel as impulsive, disorderly, and murderous. Nonetheless, their rapid growth in Spain was fueled by uniquely Spanish conditions of poverty, Church corruption, and cultural acceptance of violence. Spain itself has shaped Robert’s anger, and he models a Spanish way of thinking even as he struggles against the flaws he perceives in the country. This sort of “going native” is what Hemingway strives for in his writing; by using such Spanish symbolism he pays homage to the artistic culture and creates a more authentic Spanish atmosphere. In order to write convincingly about Robert’s experience as a man between cultures, Hemingway presents himself as a similarly international persona, an American writer who splices references to Spanish literature and art into his writing. Since he insists by the use of his meticulously detailed, realistic program that his version of events is the only accurate one, the author suggests that this multicultural way of thinking is the only way to write truthfully about a foreign country.

Through his exploration of the various aspects of Spain, Hemingway describes the foreign volunteer’s search for the country’s essence and demonstrates that it resists such reductive analysis. Robert Jordan celebrates the complexity of the country as he lies in wait for the Fascists who will kill him. He accepts both the beautiful and grotesque parts of Spain as he thinks:

I’d like to talk to Karkov. That is in Madrid. Just over the hills there, and down across the plain. Down out of the gray rocks and the pines, the heather and the gorse, across the yellow high plateau you see it rising white and beautiful. That part is just as true as Pilar’s old women drinking

the blood down at the slaughterhouse. There's no *one* thing that's true. It's all true. They way the planes are beautiful whether they are ours or theirs. The hell they are, he thought" (*FW* 467).

Robert's multifaceted vision of Spain incorporates both pastoral beauty and the horrible underbelly of Madrid that Pilar, the de facto guerrilla leader, describes when evoking the "smell of death" (254). He realizes that his previous attempts to stereotype Spain had failed and knows that he will never capture an all-encompassing image of the country. When Robert thinks about the planes, Hemingway demonstrates that one can accept and love an imperfect vision of Spain while still fighting for the Republic. In extending his appreciation of all aspects of Spain to the idea that all of the planes are beautiful, Robert offends his own anti-fascist ideals and corrects himself quickly with, "The hell they are." While he is no less partisan than Robert, Hemingway's portrayals of Lieutenant Barrendo and of the fascist victims thrown off the cliff humanize the enemy, verifying the author's claim that in his war stories he wants to "show *all* the different sides of it...So never think one story represents my viewpoint because it is much too complicated for that" (*L* 480). This last discussion of Spain is the culmination of the analytical project of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The author finally suggests the possibility that Spain is perhaps too complex to completely capture in a novel. As Robert's life ends, so must the book: the final "It's all true" is Hemingway's concession to the parts of Spain that he did not portray—the forgotten pieces that nonetheless form part of the beautiful and tragic whole.

As Hemingway fits only part of Spain's complexity into the sphere of Robert Jordan's experience, he also compresses time to form a unified narrative. The novel covers only four days, but Robert's experiences in those days expand to reflect his entire life. Just as his portrayal of Robert Jordan comments on the experience of all soldiers,

Hemingway's story about a small group of people in the mountains north of Madrid outlines the larger sociopolitical environment of the war. By thus shifting from the specific to the general, Hemingway alludes to the symbolic potential of literature itself and acknowledges the power of his novel to change its readers' ways of thinking. The approaching doom that the characters sense in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* makes them realize the momentous importance of those four days. Robert Jordan's love for Maria is intensified as he realizes how short his life will be, and it becomes an all-encompassing emotion as he tells her, "I love thee as I love all that we have fought for. I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry. I love thee as I love Madrid that we have defended and as I love all my comrades that have died" (*FW* 348). Like Orwell, Hemingway investigates the intersection of the personal and the political. Robert conflates romantic love with political ideals, expressing the idealistic fervor and single-mindedness that soldiers assume during a mission. The fact that this intimate moment encapsulates the entire Spanish Civil War also demonstrates the emotional power of literature. By making Robert realize that his experience in the hills is representative of a larger narrative, Hemingway draws attention to the historical importance of his own work.

The contracted and intensified timeline of the novel reflects Robert Jordan's busy, adventure-seeking lifestyle. Hemingway himself was an adrenaline junkie, and his deep interest in bullfighting is a testament to his need for excitement. The sort of emotional intensity that he champions in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, however, is more a sense of solidarity with one's fellows and a connection with the natural world than any sort of luxurious revelry. Robert realizes that his idealism is uninteresting to the fashionable

crowd in Madrid when he reminisces about the first few months of his war experience, telling himself, “you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world, against all tyranny...It was in those days, he thought, that you had a deep and sound and selfless pride—that would have made you a bloody bore at Gaylord’s” (236). Given Hemingway’s dislike of the rich and his declaration that he is in Spain to fight for the working class, this passage seems to be a statement of the author’s ideals as well as the character’s. The “deep and sound and selfless pride” that Robert regrets losing may be something that Hemingway either felt or always wanted to feel; this is one way in which the character represents Hemingway’s ideal vision of himself. Orwell’s commitment to socialism is similarly an expression of fighting for “all the poor in the world.” By explaining the mindset of the men who went to Spain to fight, Hemingway demonstrates the importance that they attached to the war. He attempts to give the readers an impression of the pivotal nature of these events in order to inform them as well as justifying the importance of the novel.

Hemingway brings not only Robert Jordan’s emotions but also his physical sensations to the fore in order to illustrate his growing awareness of the natural world as he approaches his death. The author shows that this simple, idyllic life results in heightened perception. The clean air of the mountains seems morally purer than that of Madrid, and the guerrillas’ simple way of life makes Robert feel an affinity with them. Tactile sensations link the characters closely to the natural world, as when Robert and Maria walk through a meadow and “Robert Jordan felt the brushing of the heather against his legs, felt the weight of his pistol in its holster against his thigh, felt the sun on his head, felt the breeze from the snow of the mountain peaks cool on his back and, in his

hand, he felt the girl's hand firm and strong, the fingers locked in his" (158). War, love, the class struggle, and the impossibly beautiful countryside with its perfect weather all coincide in this moment, while incorporating the characters into the natural world. The whole landscape seems to echo Robert and Maria's love, and their impending death seems easier to face. Death, after all, is a return to the earth. The novel begins and ends with Robert Jordan lying on the "pine-needled floor of the forest," amidst the dead, discarded parts of the tree which he will soon join, after his death, as organic matter (1). The recurring image of the forest floor conveys a cyclical sense of life and death, which along with the novel's short timeline reminds the reader of the insignificance of the characters' lives in relation to the Republican cause, and the global cause of anti-fascism. This unimportance is what gives their lives a poetic, ephemeral beauty.

In these last four days, the four most important days of his life, Robert Jordan integrates himself into Spanish society. As an essential part of the guerrilla band's social group, he has become a de facto Spaniard, which is something he desperately wants to be. Robert justifies his presence in the hills to Pablo when they first meet, saying, "That I am a foreigner is not my fault. I would rather have been born here" (15). This mention of birth brings to mind the threat of death, and at this point Robert is already coming to terms with the idea of dying in the hills. This is one way in which Robert does something Hemingway imagines for himself but cannot do; the may author feel Spanish, but when he was forced to leave because of the Republican defeat, he forfeited all hope of living a Spanish life. By dying there without a chance to resume his American life, Robert Jordan vicariously fulfills the author's desire to assimilate into Spanish culture. Facing almost

certain death on the day that he will blow the bridge, the character thinks poignantly of the relationships that he has developed in the last few days:

I have been all my life in these hills since I have been here. Anselmo is my oldest friend. I know him better than I know Charles, than I know Chub, than I know Guy, than I know Mike, and I know them all well. Agustín, with his vile mouth, is my brother, and I never had a brother. Maria is my true love and my wife. I never had a true love. I never had a wife. She is also my sister, and I never had a sister, and my daughter, and I will never have a daughter. I hate to leave a thing that is so good. (381)

The nearness of death dilates the time that Robert spends in the hills and causes him to view his experiences there as the most important ones of his life. By assimilating so well into the band, he has earned his place as a Spanish guerrilla and a member of the working class. This passage may also be autobiographical in its introspection about the foreigner's relationship to Spain. If these four days in Spain can encompass Robert's entire life, Hemingway's years there gave him lifetimes of material from which to work, which is one reason that he presents so many different sides of Spanish life in his writing. The intensity of experience that Hemingway constantly sought, which reveals so much about his deep but not idealized love for Spain, exposes itself through Robert's epiphany about how monumental this experience has been. His emotions are heightened not only by his impending death, but also because his life in the hills has opened him to the full emotional range of the Spanish peasant in the virtuous landscape. Furthermore, as the characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are indeed symbolic of different aspects of what Hemingway perceives as the essence of Spain, the author symbolically incorporates his American protagonist into the fabric of Spanish society itself.

Because *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is particularly intent upon presenting multifaceted portraits of real Spaniards, Hemingway's realistic program incorporates the

Spanish language, both by using it directly and by approximating it in English.

Hemingway's descriptions and manipulations of Spanish reveal his interaction with the culture and show the problems that can arise in using English to write about a foreign country. In representing the dialogue, for instance, Hemingway deliberately uses "thou" and "you" for different social situations, based on the times at which a Spaniard would use *tú* and *Usted*, which are the informal and formal forms of second-person address, respectively. Though the difference may not be apparent or consequential to a reader unfamiliar with Spanish, the fact that Hemingway uses both forms shows the importance that he attached to accuracy in his portrayal of the language, and also highlights the antiquated nature of the dialect. Azevedo notes inconsistencies exist where "you" and "thou" are used in the same sentence, or the subject and verb do not agree in English, concluding: "Nevertheless, such anomalous usage succeeds in reminding us that the characters speak an alien tongue" (34). Hemingway's insistence upon making the conversation seem Spanish helps further his aesthetic program, the creation of a beautiful yet realistic setting for his novel, as well as his ideological one, which convinces the reader of the truth of the narrative through strict attention to detail and faithfulness to the reality of Spain. Of course, Robert Jordan, as a sort of mediator between the author and the reader, conveys his understanding of such linguistic details and his interpretation of their English meaning. Hemingway thus assumes the roles of both writer and translator at the same time that he illustrates the character's process of experiencing and interpreting the Spanish language.

Of course, Hemingway does not always translate the Spanish phrases that he includes. Several common interjections and figures of speech are repeated throughout



the novel, such as *Qué va*, akin to “No way!” *Leche*, a shortened form of a longer phrase, *cago en la leche*, roughly equivalent to “I shit in the milk,” also appears frequently as an exclamation, often in the speech of foul-mouthed Agustín—though in English the character’s cursing consists of long strings of “unnameables” and “obscenities.” Robert Jordan occasionally translates his own thoughts from Spanish to English, to the benefit of the reader, as when he thinks of El Sordo trapped on the mountaintop in “*Un callejón sin salida*. A passageway with no exit” (FW 305). When Robert thinks in Spanish or contemplates the nature of language itself, he demonstrates the depth of his knowledge of, and love for, Spain. He is as authentic as Hemingway must have been to have written these ideas, and his position as an outsider who speaks Spanish fluently allows him this bilingual meditation as a sign of his understanding of the culture. When the character thinks in two languages, the writer did so first. In this passage, Hemingway details his own creative process, first thinking of an expression used in Spain, and then translating it into a certain English phrase to evoke a specific effect. This happens often when Hemingway has Robert think in Spanish or contemplate the language itself. This exploration of linguistics lends credibility to Hemingway’s fictional environment—the reader is constantly reminded that the conversations he or she is reading take place in Spanish in the world of the novel. It also gives the book a journalistic cast as Hemingway recreates, as accurately as possible, the language of Spain and the experience of the foreign combatant who is constantly forced to switch between his native and acquired tongues.

One class of phrases that Hemingway uses in dialogue deserves special mention. Called “transliterations” by several critics, they are phrases or even whole passages that

sound awkward in English because they are written as if they had been translated word-for-word from Spanish. Spanish word order is preserved in many cases, or words are deliberately mistranslated, such as “rare” for *raro*, which means “strange,” as when Pablo says that Kashkin “spoke in a very rare manner” (21). When he uses these intentionally awkward phrases, Hemingway adds to the foreign effect produced by the use of the word “thou”: the reader has an insight into the exact rhythm and pace of the words the character is speaking. This realistic effect is heightened for the reader who speaks Spanish, and it is another way for Hemingway to display his knowledge of the language to artistic and persuasive ends. The impression given by the phrase “less bad” as a response to a suggestion is one of terse wartime realism, though it is used quite frequently in everyday conversation in Spain (62). When expressing wishes or desires Spanish speakers often omit the first verb, so “That this afternoon should come,” spoken by Maria, gives a primal, emotional force to the wish, almost willing it into reality (130). This manner of speaking helps develop Maria’s character: she wishes fervently for many things, and tries to live life to the fullest, just as Robert Jordan does. Likewise, the passion present in everyday expressions in Spanish tells the reader something about Spain and the Spanish character—one of the things Hemingway seems to love about the country is the emotional intensity of Spanish life.

Part of Hemingway’s realistic program is his portrayal of impolite Spanish phrases, of which *cagar en la leche* is the most common, translated in Primitivo’s reaction to the massacre of El Sordo’s band by the Fascists as, “obscenity them in the milk of their filth,” which is clearly not an English oath, but the translation of a Spanish one (297). The specifically Spanish way the curses are formulated gives them more

power and furthers the reader's knowledge of the way Spaniards express emotions. However, the self-censorship through which Hemingway was writing means that the novel is filled with passages such as, "Go then unprintably to the campfire with thy obscene dynamite," and makes extensive use of the words "muck" and "mucking" as curses (44, 241). The author wrote in an August 1940 letter to the editor Charles Scribner, "When there are too many obscenities on a page will get in some other word," though in correspondence with Maxwell Perkins later that month he admits to changing "the word unprintable as I thought it gave a literary connotation that was bad. I changed it to un-nameable or some other word" (L 508, 513). The conflicting forces of realism and decorum are at work in the passages with "too many obscenities on a page": Hemingway maintains his commitment to portraying everyday speech as accurately as possible, but without the use of actual curse words, the passages can become repetitive. The one use of "unprintable" above seems an act of protest against censorship, displacing the blame from the author to the editors, though Hemingway recognized this "literary connotation" and removed some instances of the word to placate the editors and publishers. The author thus reveals his deliberate attitude toward language in all of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and suggests that the novel was a linguistic experiment as much as a novelistic account of the Spanish Civil War.

Not only does Hemingway comment on the Spanish language through his use and transliteration of it, but he also analyzes it through Robert Jordan's thoughts. By making Robert a Spanish instructor who also speaks French and German, Hemingway can continue his cultural studies by comparing different languages and what they show about the people that speak them. Upon meeting Agustín, who complains of being bored,

Robert Jordan “thought how the word *aburrimiento* which means boredom in Spanish was a word no peasant would use in any other language. Yet it is one of the most common words in the mouth of a Spaniard of any class” (FW 45). What Robert notices—and what Hemingway conveys to the reader—is not that Spanish peasants are more educated, but that all Spaniards expect a certain degree of stimulation from life. The common complaint of boredom indicates a continual search for entertainment; the culture itself is *bon vivant*, even in wartime. Hemingway comments on the different modes of speaking that occur in different languages when the American reassures Anselmo: “‘For us will be the bridge and the battle, should there be one,’ Robert Jordan said and saying it in the dark, he felt a little theatrical but it sounded well in Spanish” (43). In English this does sound “theatrical,” but in Spanish, everyday speech is more emphatic than in English. Peninsular Spanish in particular bears the influence of the strong theatrical tradition begun in the Golden Age of Spanish literature, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In terms of self-representation in speech, Robert thinks critically about both Spanish and English later in this same passage: “‘It should be of the highest interest,’ Anselmo said and hearing him say it honestly and clearly with no pose, neither the English pose of understatement nor any Latin bravado, Robert Jordan thought he was very lucky to have this old man” (43). Robert clearly values honesty and clarity of expression, but rather than only being thankful for Anselmo’s lack of “Latin bravado,” he realizes that the “pose of understatement” that English often employs in dangerous situations can be harmful as well. Robert, the reader learns, is able to integrate into the guerrilla band because he is a man between cultures, capable of thinking about different Spanish modes of expression yet still a privileged outsider. By making the reader pay more attention

such speeches through Robert's notice of them, Hemingway carefully sculpts the characters through their speech patterns, while also making their conversation as realistic as possible.

While the author certainly relies upon his extensive personal experience to create a contemporary atmosphere, he uses archaic language to illustrate the Spaniards' manner of speaking. The reader's first impression of the dialect spoken by the guerrilla fighters is given by a rather surprised Robert Jordan: "Anselmo was speaking old Castilian and it went something like this, '...Now we come for something of consummate importance and thee, with thy dwelling place to be undisturbed, put thy fox-hole before the interests of humanity...I this and that in the this and that of thy father. I this and that in thy this'" (11). Hemingway announces that he is writing a very literal translation of Spanish, and then obscures the obscene words out of self-censorship, but the words he chooses bring to mind the English of the seventeenth century—the time period from which Robert Jordan thinks Anselmo's phrases come. This "transliteration" into archaic language perpetuates the dreamlike, pastoral atmosphere of the natural setting in which the too-worldly characters move. By casting their manner of speaking back into the Spanish Golden Age, a time of honor plays and neo-Platonic sonnets, Hemingway illustrates the challenges caused by a thoroughly modern version of war being thrust upon a culture not quite ready to receive it.

Hemingway's knowledge of the Golden Age adds depth to the novel, but one writer in particular stands out as his favorite from that period, perhaps for stylistic reasons. In a 1952 letter to Bernard Berenson, Hemingway writes, "I never knew Saint Teresa because she was before my time. If we had been contemporaries, I am quite sure

we would have been good friends. The same with Juan de la Cruz. Quevedo I feel I know better than my brother” (*L* 811). Hemingway’s admiration for Francisco de Quevedo, a Golden Age poet and literary critic, is reflected in Robert Jordan’s frequent allusions to his work, for instance comparing Anselmo’s antique dialect to “reading Quevedo” (*FW* 11). Quevedo was the leading proponent of *conceptismo*, a style of verse that expressed complex ideas in simple words with straightforward syntax. *Conceptismo* found its opposite in *culteranismo*, which used extremely complex, intertwined phrases to express basic ideas. From Hemingway’s spare aesthetic, it is clear which side he would have taken in this seventeenth-century debate—the two writers’ similar styles undoubtedly had much to do with his interest in Quevedo.

Hemingway also uses Golden Age literature to illustrate modern problems and defend the Spanish working class against ongoing social inequality. He uses *Fuenteovejuna*, a play by Lope de Vega, as an allegory for the continuing inequality of the leftist power structure during the war. Lope de Vega was the founding father of Spanish theater, wildly famous in his time, and extremely prolific—he wrote over a thousand plays. *Fuenteovejuna*, one of his most famous works, is about peasants who rise up to kill their cruel and lascivious overlord; it is often described as revolutionary because the people triumph over the aristocrat. Hemingway makes reference to this play when describing the circumstances under which Robert meets the Russian propagandist Karkov for the first time: “Kashkin had said he should meet Karkov because Karkov wanted to know Americans and because he was the greatest lover of Lope de Vega in the world and thought ‘Fuente Ovejuna’ was the greatest play ever written. Maybe it was at that, but he, Robert Jordan, did not think so” (231). No doubt the socialist interpretation

lies behind Karkov's fondness for the play, but Hemingway is presumably familiar with the alternate critical tradition that points to the peasants' continuing fealty to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella as proof that they still operate within the feudal hierarchy. Robert Jordan's rejection of *Fuenteovejuna* seems to reflect that he has a deeper knowledge of Spanish culture than Karkov.

This episode has further significance because it exposes Karkov, and by extension the Soviet authorities that he represents, as less progressive than they believe themselves to be. Karkov is a Soviet agent who is supposedly on the side of the Spanish working class, but consideration of his character next to the plot of *Fuenteovejuna* exposes his role as not that of a peasant in the play, but rather that of the monarchy that silently maintains the status quo. Hemingway emphasizes, through this allegory, that just as the modern Spanish workers think that they are escaping the old order by fighting in the provinces, the powerful Soviets work to keep them in check, allowing them some power, but not enough to threaten the Communist agenda. Once again, Hemingway supports the Spanish workers over those who oppress them, but the fact that he associates this play with Karkov shows his rejection of stereotype in portraying the working class. The Spain for which the author was willing to fight and write was one in which the peasants could move beyond their roles in *Fuenteovejuna* and gain power over their own destinies.

While at times Hemingway plunges into analysis of Golden Age literature, at others he struggles with the elite, literary nature of the author-combatant. Robert's life in America seems comically trivial next to the horrific realities of wartime Spain, but he decides that literature can actually be a powerful force in society. During one of Robert's

daydreams about life after the war, he thinks about returning with Maria to teach in Montana, only to cruelly remind himself that she is a rape victim:

When undergraduates who take Spanish IV come in to smoke pipes in the evening and have those so valuable informal discussions about Quevedo, Lope de Vega, Galdós, and the other always admirable dead, Maria can tell them about how some of the blue-shirted crusaders for the true faith sat on her head while others twisted her arms and pulled her skirts up and stuffed them in her mouth. (165)

Robert's sickening reality check illustrates some problems with what he considers the removed, genteel side of literature, as well as his need to put Maria on a pedestal out of masculine protective instinct. Unfortunately, all of the protection from harm that he could offer her would be retroactive, and she is determined to wreak her own revenge.

The profusion of Golden Age references may reflect Robert Jordan's difficulty in reconciling the abstract study of three-hundred-year-old literature with the concrete reality of his life among the guerrillas. Hemingway uses the Golden Age as a stand-in for literary study in general: what gravity can it have next to true stories of the terror of war? There is no need to read honor plays to experience the violent side of Spain; it is right before one's eyes, and it always makes a mockery of literary artifice. There is also the intriguing contradiction between the material of Robert's studies and his personal beliefs, given that the Golden Age writers defended the ideas of "God, King, and Country" so venerated by the Falange, Maria's rapists. Alternatively, this passage describes Hemingway's own use of the high art of the Golden Age that has stood the test of time to describe the suffering of the downtrodden, such as Maria's story. Not only was Golden Age literature filled with violence, but, as *Fuenteovejuna* shows, literature must not necessarily shy away from championing the causes of the poor and the persecuted. While Robert takes a sarcastic tone in his mental commentary, the structure of the passage



seems to insist that literature and true stories are related—perhaps instead of reading Golden Age literature through a modern lens, the reader should do the reverse. Maria’s story is a classic tragedy of honor. Robert venerates her because he sees her as simultaneously incorruptibly virtuous and in need of protection, and Hemingway tells her story as an affirmation of these qualities that could very easily be lost to history without the help of literature.

Maria, like the rest of the Spanish characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, exemplifies the author’s attempts to convey the essence of the experience of the country while also creating individualized portraits in the artistic framework of the novel. Each main Spanish character seems to comment on a stereotypically Spanish attribute, either by embodying it and then inverting it, or by complicating it. The ideal aspect of Spain that Maria represents is female honor, but she does little to subvert her role. Hemingway was familiar with the dark side of being a woman in Spain, but Maria is such an incorruptible beacon of virtue that she is the closest to a stereotype of all the Spanish characters. Her family was killed when she was raped at the start of the war, and while she does not seem obsessed with revenge she talks of killing in a detached, simple way, asking, “‘But will we kill Falangists? It was they who did it...I would like to kill some very much’” (353). The female avenging angel is a trope of Spanish literature dating to before the Golden Age. The protagonist of *Fuenteovejuna* is the character Laurencia, who leads the revolt against the cruel commander after he attempts to rape her. In a time when women could not own property, their honor was the one thing they were expected to guard at all costs. At least in the theater, when stripped of it they could assume male roles en route to revenge by cross-dressing or cutting their hair—Hemingway structurally

enacts this transformation by having the Falangists shave Maria's head—and finally committing murder to “cleanse” their good name. Certainly, Maria is updated for the twentieth century in some ways, but she also wants to keep house for Robert Jordan and insists that she is his wife when they have sex for the second time—though perhaps she does so in an attempt to erase her past (262). Her motivation and character type fit into the literary tradition of a woman cleansing her honor, thus making her a conservative figure who fulfills the cultural expectations about female behavior.

Maria's unblemished moral virtue may be a purposeful exaggeration meant to intensify Robert Jordan's emotional expression and his feeling that his last four days in the mountains are a microcosm of his entire life. Her devotion to the Republican cause arises out of her desire for revenge, but she also represents the innocent heroism of youthful volunteers that Robert Jordan labels one of “the beauties of civil war” when she insists that she wants him to kill her if they are captured, and shows him the razor blade that she carries with her (171). Robert has a complicated relationship with suicide, since he considers his father a coward for having killed himself, but when Maria speaks so matter-of-factly about it he sees it in a romantic light. Maria's moral perfection is perhaps meant to justify Robert Jordan's love for her, but it somewhat compromises the realism of the novel because she becomes less believable as an actual person. Each Spanish character presents a different side of Spain, so that together they form a comprehensive view of Spaniards—Maria seems the most like a symbol of unblemished beauty, purity, and dignified vengeance.

Morally and physically, Pablo is Maria's antithesis—full of *machismo*, murderous and impulsive, leader of the troop in name only, and incapacitated by depression, despair,

and alcoholism. Structurally, his barbarity balances Maria's saintliness; he is one of the cruel Republicans Hemingway portrays out of a commitment to the truth, as the author proactively defends himself against accusations of writing propaganda. Robert Jordan forms an uneasy alliance with Pablo, and Hemingway gives the Spaniard credit for his valor and his charisma, showing flashes of his brilliance in battle. In fact, several characters insist that Pablo was a great leader at the beginning of the movement, when, as Pilar narrates, their band ran all of the fascists in one town off a cliff into the gorge below. By the time Robert Jordan meets him, Pablo retains his disregard for human life, but he has lost his nerve. Robert is not bothered by Pablo's drunkenness, but it is one aspect of his personality that leads Robert to make generalizations about Spain that stem from his anger at Pablo, such as, "there is no people like them when they are good and when they go bad there is no people that is worse" (16). Here the protagonist not only falls into the trap of making the country answer for the faults of one man, but also stereotypes Spaniards as systematically more volatile than Americans. As Robert struggles against the impulse to generalize, Hemingway is also commenting on his own task of showing all sides of Spain while creating a believable antagonist. Pablo is necessary for Hemingway's comprehensive picture of Spain, as are the "smell of death" and the war crimes: the novel relies upon complexity to transmit truth. Pablo is the source of much of that complexity, and provokes several of Robert's ruminations on the nature of Spain.

The conflict between creating character types to serve a narrative purpose and emphasizing that the characters are individuals rather than stereotypes of an entire culture is constantly at work in the contentious relationship between Robert and Pablo. After

blowing the bridge, and finding out that Pablo has shot the members of the other band that were working with him, Robert finally chides himself, “Don’t make moral judgments. What do you expect from a murderer? You’re working with a murderer. Keep your mouth shut. You knew enough about him before. This is nothing new. But you dirty bastard, he thought. You dirty, rotten bastard” (455). Robert finally hates Pablo as an individual, rather than a composite of all the evil Spaniards throughout history. Hemingway seems to deplore the conditions of war that force good people to cooperate with the likes of Pablo, while maintaining that the necessity exists. Pablo’s defense of the murders demonstrates his territoriality: “They were not of our band” (456). This insular conception of social mores explains his hatred for Robert: as a foreigner trying to give him orders, the American undermines Pablo’s traditional authority. Pablo embodies certain unsavory aspects of Spain that Hemingway dislikes, but his character does not suffer from invariability as Maria’s does; he is perfectly believable as an individual in his alternating subversion and aggression, commitment and despair. Pablo and the atrocities he commits are proof that the author is aware of the dark side of Spain and not afraid to portray it in the service of literary truth. As the antagonist, Pablo is an important structural part of the narrative, and he also strengthens the realism of the setting that establishes Hemingway’s textual authority and thus the author’s thematic arguments.

However, if Maria and Pablo are in opposition, Pilar refuses to choose sides. She is the most complex of the Spanish characters, and the most concerned with the country itself; she stands at the center of Hemingway’s exploration of Spanish national and cultural identity. Pilar, whose name means “pillar,” is indeed the support that keeps the

guerrillas standing. Part-gypsy, she reads palms and believes in several supernatural phenomena that Robert discredits, but she is also absolutely committed to the idea of the Republic. Her criticisms of Spain are the harshest of any of the Spanish characters', but as a bullfighter's girlfriend and a gypsy, she knows the most about both the glorified and undignified sides of Spain. Pilar is the one who describes the "smell of death" to Robert Jordan, telling him to imagine a combination of the smells of a ship below decks, rotten flowers, and more:

‘Stand there on the wet paving when there is a fog from the Manzanares and wait for the old women who go before daylight to drink the blood of the beasts that are slaughtered. When such an old woman comes out of the *matadero*, holding her shawl around her, with her face gray and her eyes hollow, and the whiskers of age on her chin, and on her cheeks, set in the waxen white of her face as the sprouts grow from the seed of the bean, not bristles, but pale sprouts in the death of her face; put your arms tight around her, *Inglés*, and hold her to you and kiss her on the mouth.’ (255)

While this passage is grotesque and terrifying, Hemingway cements it into the realm of realism by using Pilar, the novel's most honest character, as his mouthpiece. The imagery is attached to the narrative in such a way that it is presented as taking place in Spanish reality, denying the reader any comfort that he or she could have derived from displacing it into the realm of fantasy. Hemingway insists his August 1940 letter to Charles Scribner that this passage is essential to the novel, but he must balance his desire to paint a full portrait of Spain with the restrictions of decorum: "There is a goddamned horribleness about part of Madrid like no other place in the world. Goya never half drew it. I need that to make this book whole. But I tried to get it without putting in unpublishableness" (L 509). The author openly acknowledges that the passage is not beautiful in the sleek, poetic way that much of his prose is, due to its frightening subject matter and graphic detail. He claims to Maxwell Perkins weeks later that removing it,

however, would be “like takeing [sic] either the bass viol or the oboe out of my orchestra because they each make an ugly noise when played alone” (513). The passage is indeed vital to Hemingway’s creation of a rounded, nuanced vision of Spain; he constantly insists that he must depict the country with all its flaws in order to do it justice. The way in which Pilar describes the sprout-faced women is also essential to the development of her character; while she idealizes the Republic, she is critical of what she sees as backwardness in the vestiges of the old, dark Spain. Nevertheless, she cannot sever her longstanding connections to the world of fortune-telling and bullfights.

Hemingway uses Pilar in particular to demonstrate how Spanish society is torn between love of tradition and envy of modernity—and he himself seems unable to take a side. Pilar, who has been in several relationships with bullfighters, defends one of her past lovers, who died from internal bleeding after a hit from the flat of a horn, when the soldier Primitivo belittles his death by saying he was “tubercular”:

‘Tubercular?’ Pilar said. ‘Who wouldn’t be tubercular from the punishment he received? In this country where no poor man can ever hope to make money unless he is a criminal like Juan March, or a bull-fighter, or a tenor in the opera? Why wouldn’t he be tubercular? In a country where the bourgeoisie over-eat so that their stomachs are all ruined and they cannot live without bicarbonate of soda and the poor are hungry from their birth till the day they die, why wouldn’t he be tubercular?’ (*FW* 184)

Pilar’s biting attacks on the Spanish upper classes emerge from a personal sense of injustice. Through her character, Hemingway explains and politicizes his affection for the Spanish working class. Pilar’s criticism of the enormous divide between “poor” and “bourgeoisie” demonstrates her political conviction. Though she is not a devout Communist like the doctrine-spouting Joaquín, she makes the point that because of the systems that the rich use to control and maintain their wealth, opportunities for the poor

simply do not exist in Spain. Hemingway does not argue for a specific form of government in the novel, but he does indicate some of his reasons for fighting fascism in this passage. He has already made clear his distaste for the rich. Hemingway loves watching bullfights, but he shows through Pilar's speech that he realizes the fame and fortune of the bullfighters is at odds with the actual lifestyle of Spain's poor. Hemingway expresses his criticisms of Spain through Pilar's extensive speeches, and unlike Robert Jordan's monologues, they rarely end contritely. Pilar is the voice of truth, though it is often a truth that no one wants to hear. Since Hemingway strives to tell the absolute truth throughout this novel—though of course his truth is simply a version of events, like Orwell's—he uses Pilar to make his most complex points about Spain.

This monumental female character, however, also affirms that idealism can live on after a series of disappointments—in fact, it must live on in wartime. Pilar is a symbol of Spanish resilience. She is deeply committed to the Republic, but has nagging doubts about the war effort that she tries to stifle in order to go on believing: “The woman of Pablo could feel her rage changing to sorrow and to a feeling of the thwarting of all hope and promise. She knew this feeling from when she was a girl and she knew the things that caused it all through her life. It came now suddenly and she put it away from her and would not let it touch her, neither her nor the Republic” (58). Pilar's encroaching sense of disillusionment parallels the futility of the guerrilla band's current mission, and that of the Republican effort. However, her following thoughts show the depth of conviction that Hemingway saw among the devotees of the Republic. Given Pilar's background and how hard her life has been up to this point, she clings to the Republic as the last thing in which she can believe. Again Hemingway uses Pilar to illustrate the reasons behind the

almost romantic passion that foreign volunteers attributed to Republican Spain—to which they responded by going there to fight for it.

Hemingway's Spain was not just the Spain of Pilar, however. In order for it really to be "all true," Hemingway had to include Pablo's Spain as well. The author's focus on the complexity of the wartime situation creates a novel in which the characters, many of whom represent specific aspects of Spain, complement the society in which they move. Hemingway's unique manipulation of the English language to evoke Spanish speech, along with his layered Golden Age allusions, are two ways in which the complexity of his literary project echoes the complexity of Spain. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* exemplifies the narrative goal of the modern novel as it depicts the essential truth of Spanish society while incorporating symbolic characters. Hemingway's distillation of the war into four days and Spain into a few mountain valleys is an artistic process that does not detract from the political themes of the work. The truth of the realistic Spanish setting and the truth of the message are inseparable.



### Conclusion: Critical Receptions

The publication processes and critical receptions of Orwell's and Hemingway's books were radically different. Orwell wrote *Homage to Catalonia* quickly, months after returning to Britain in 1963, but as John Rodden explains in his book *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of "St. George" Orwell*, it was "originally remaindered in 1938 even before Secker & Warburg recovered its advance and [is] yet a classic since its 1952 publication" (96-97). In the light of the author's other successful political books, *Homage to Catalonia* became much more popular after this second publication. With time, Orwell's political perspective on the POUM suppression was vindicated, and today his work is seen as insightful reportage rather than the dissenting rants of a radical. Hemingway's novel has undergone less of a transformation; extensively marketed and hugely successful, it was a popular classic even before its publication. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was also widely praised as the author's best novel. Certainly Hemingway's book champions the working class and reflects the writer's Republican sympathies, but today *Homage to Catalonia* reads as more overtly political, though its politics may be remote to the modern reader. The legacies of these authors, which encompass so much more than their Spanish Civil War experiences, have changed the way that their works are viewed today. In order to understand the personal, political, and journalistic motives behind *Homage to Catalonia* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, one's literary focus must be narrowed to the particular historical moment of the Spanish Civil War.

Despite the fact that the popularity of *Homage to Catalonia* has completely turned around since its first publication, Orwell expressed misgivings in the 1940s about the

political content that makes his memoir so historically important today. Orwell himself made it clear that his ideas were at odds with what most of the press was reporting. It is interesting that a memoir that was radical in 1938 is today, according to scholars John Rodden and John Rossi in their article “The Mysterious (Un)meeting of George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway,” “regarded both in the English-speaking world and in Spain itself as the best work of reportage to emerge from that bitter conflict” (56). While the book tends toward journalism in some passages, it by no means a traditional “work of reportage”; Orwell seems to have conceived of it as a combination of memoir and political tract. The fact that *Homage to Catalonia* is sometimes viewed today as an objective historical document is even more surprising given Orwell’s attempts to depoliticize it in the 1940s. In “Why I Write,” the author comments on the specificity of the political chapters, writing, “Clearly such a chapter, which after a year or two would lose its interest for any ordinary reader, must ruin the book. A critic whom I respect read me a lecture about it. ‘Why did you put in all that stuff?’ he said. ‘You’ve turned what might have been a good book into journalism’” (WIW 320). Orwell implies that he did not intend to write a journalistic work, and that the admired critic believes that a “good book” must contain literary elements that transcend journalism. Of course, Orwell’s book is a literary work that showcases the author’s direct but lyrical style and aims to entertain at the same time that it persuades the reader. It is a “good book” at the same time that it is “journalism.”

If honestly conveying the truth was Orwell’s goal, as time passed after the war he became less interested in the political details and perhaps wanted to focus on the more autobiographical, even novelistic aspects of the text. Perhaps, years after writing, Orwell

regretted his harsh political rhetoric, though his later novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which are extremely critical of Stalinism, indicate that his views on the subject had not changed. In any case, Davison remarks in a footnote to “Why I Write” that in 1949, “Orwell asked that...chapters five and eleven be removed from the body of the book and made into appendixes. About six months before he died, he sent a marked copy of the text to [publisher] Roger Senhouse and asked him to ensure that the changes were made. Senhouse ignored this request” (321). To today’s readers *Homage to Catalonia* is an intensely political work that constantly insists on its own veracity by virtue of its nature as a firsthand account. The political chapters may not translate as easily to contemporary experience as do the passages on the psychological nature of war, but they are very important in connecting the other sections in which Orwell describes his growing relationship with Spain. These chapters are also essential to understanding the author’s ideological point of departure for his anti-Stalinist novels. By keeping chapters five and eleven in the book, Senhouse gave readers access to an important phase of Orwell’s political development and contributed to the image of Orwell as a crusading journalist.

Though the text of *Homage to Catalonia* was unchanged between its 1938 and 1952 publications, the public was much more ready to receive it in 1952. Not only was the Spanish Civil War long past, so ideological wounds had healed, but furthermore, with the defeat of the Republic, the Soviets had lost their influence in Spain, and information about Communist abuses was more accessible. The British liberal press that Orwell had lambasted was probably more willing to criticize Stalinism after the fall of fascism, when Britain’s alliance with the USSR had been dissolved and the Iron Curtain was seen as the

new threat to the West. Orwell's work was also in much higher demand by 1952, after the success of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and the author's death in January 1950. The transformation of Orwell's image is the focus of Rodden's *The Politics of Literary Reputation*, in which the critic classifies four "faces" of Orwell and claims that that "the Prophet and Saint faces crystallized...between the 1949 publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the 1952 American edition of *Homage to Catalonia*" (96-97). Indeed, Lionel Trilling's introduction to this edition of the memoir exemplifies the image crafted for Orwell after his death, describing the author as "a virtuous man" who was "only interested in telling the truth" (viii, xxiii). While this statement tends to reduce Orwell to the status of a faithful reporter, it is also a view of himself that the author attempts to perpetuate in parts of his memoir, in order to strengthen his authority as a political writer.

Unlike *Homage to Catalonia*, *For Whom the Bells Tolls* was extremely popular when it was first published, and remains so today. Robert W. Trogon notes in his book *The Lousy Racket: Hemingway, Scribners and the Business of Literature* that the author was a worldwide celebrity by 1940, but nothing he had written in the 1930s could "match the success that Hemingway's publications of the 1920s had enjoyed" (197). The time was right for what Trogon terms "the blockbuster," and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was marketed extensively in anticipation of great commercial success (217). Trogon also claims that Hemingway's avoidance of English curse words was an artistic concession meant to widen the book's readership: "Hemingway was writing and editing the novel with a view toward serialization and perhaps even book club selection, since postal regulations would prohibit a book club from shipping a book judged to be obscene" (203). Though certainly the author was concerned with reaching a wide readership, this

self-censorship had little effect on the literary quality of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; it was almost universally acclaimed in the United States, and remains a classic.

Hemingway's novel was received less warmly in Spain than it was in the US, even after it was removed from the list of books banned during the early years of Franco's dictatorship. This may suggest that Hemingway's own determination to "go native" in Spain could have backfired, because the Spanish public was wary about reading a novel describing its own recent violent past. The novel's unpopularity in Spain was also probably related to public discomfort at reading a foreigner's portrayal of their country. At first, contends Lisa A. Twomey in her article "Taboo or Tolerable? Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in Postwar Spain," conservative Spanish critics tended to dismiss the novel as propaganda while leftist exiles were frustrated with Hemingway for criticizing the Communists (55). As the author's works became more widely studied, however, some critics, such as Francisco Yndurain, suggested that in Spain Hemingway "discovered a special way of considering death, of living it, if you will. And the novel about our war, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, more than a tendentious work, which it is to a certain degree, confronts the American who enlisted with the reds with the feeling of his death more than with the political ideology he had gone to defend" (qtd. in Twomey 58). Yndurain is willing to sidestep the inconvenient fact that both protagonist and author fought with "the reds" in order to focus on what he perceives as a more central theme: death. Hemingway certainly comments frequently in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* on the pervasive presence of death in Spanish culture. However, this does not mean that the political motive and focus of the work can be conveniently ignored. While

the novel may not be as pointedly controversial as *Homage to Catalonia*, it is political because supports the Spanish worker.

Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* are both political works authorizing a certain version of events. Orwell includes the then-controversial argument that the Communists framed the POUM, but he narrates his arrival at his anti-Stalinist stance in relation to his growing understanding of the Spanish people. Hemingway, too, uses his personal relationship with Spain to investigate the foreigner's place in that country. Like Orwell, he argues that his version of the story is the only truthful one, both by creating characters and an environment that are as realistic as possible, and by constantly insisting that the Spanish situation is too complex to be reduced to a dichotomy. Ultimately, both writers defend the working class in their writing just as they did on the battlefield. Consciousness of their bias did not make them lose sight of their convictions, nor does it diminish the literary value of their works. If, as Orwell writes in his essay "Charles Dickens," it is true that "all art is propaganda," these books are artful, propagandistic, and at the same time utterly convincing, not despite but because of the authors' bias (47).

List of Abbreviations

*FW*: Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

*HC*: George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*

*IW*: George Orwell, "Inside the Whale"

*L*: Ernest Hemingway, *Selected Letters of Ernest Hemingway, 1917-1961*

*WIW*: George Orwell, "Why I Write"

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